

HOLIDAY AT CEMAES BAY, ANGLESEY

July-August, 1960

We drove away from Wimbledon Saturday morning, July 30th in the Consul, with luggage on the rack above, in the "boot" and all around us. We were all there - Ga, Mum and Dad, David, Gwyneth and Trevor (in his car seat). School was over - G. had finished a couple of days before, and D's school Speech Day had occurred the afternoon before.

We went north rapidly on the M1 motorway, and turned off to visit Stratford-on-Avon, where we saw Shakespeare's tombstone in the old church, his birthplace and, out of town, Ann Hathaway's cottage and old-fashioned garden. We also visited the museum in the Theatre, and has tea by the river. Stratford was crowded with visitors from many countries.

On the way to Stratford we had stopped briefly in Banbury, where we saw the Cross in the market square and bought some Banbury cakes.

After Stratford we stopped for the night at Studley, where we had booked rooms at an old inn or pub, "Ye Olde Barley Mow". Much Oriental furniture and knick-knacks in the halls - also uneven floors. Studley's claim to fame is that needles and fish-hooks are manufactured there.

On next morning to Shrewsbury, where we lunched, visited ancient church of St. Mary (possibly pre-900 A.D.), with its sharp spire, fine glass and Norman arches; also saw many half-timbered houses, and glimpsed (only) the ruinous Shrewsbury Castle. The city is almost surrounded by the winding Severn. The castle was one of the chain built by Ed. I against the Welsh princes. Later in 1403 Henry IV defeated Harry Hotspur and Owen Glendower in the Battle of Shrewsbury, said to be bloodiest ever fought on English soil. It marked end of Welsh resistance.

From here we soon entered Wales, by valley of the Dee, green and sunny. As we climbed into more mountainous parts became rainy, rocky and bleak. Passed campers and climbers, all drenched. Through Betws-y-Coed, a mountain resort. On through Bangor, where failed to find restaurant for late tea or early dinner (Sunday); crossed the famous early suspension bridge over Menai Strait on to Anglesey. Driving

up east coast of island reached Cemaes Bay around 7*30 P.M., where greeted by Mrs. Hughes at "Gorphysfa", Atlantic Terrace. Enjoyed cold supper.

Ga and Gwyneth shared one room, Mum, Dad and Trevor another, and David had small front room to himself. We also have a living room downstairs; our rooms look out over fields and hills, and can see water of Bay.

Our day starts with tea brought to us in bed; then down for big breakfast. Some days we make short excursions to other parts of island: to Llanfechel, about 2 miles inland, where David and Dad attended a Sunday service in Welsh; only about 12 others in congregation and no music. Church, with its relatively long nave, is 12th century, and like all other buildings on island of stone plastered over on outside; to Din Ligwy, near Llaneillian, to see the ancient (2000 B.C.) burial chamber of Neolithic times: an enormous stone about 20' in diameter and a yard thick, resting like a table-top on small upright stones. This was in corner of field near road. In another field nearby was ~~a~~ the hollow ~~stone~~ stone shell of a little chapel, 12th century, open to the sky on its lonely hilltop. In yet another field, after walking warily past cattle, we came upon ruins of a 300-400 A.D. circular and rectangular hut settlement, walled around. Either a tribal chieftain's or perhaps a Roman outpost?

On way to above we had earlier climbed in car to a high point among rolling fields, from which we could see far out to sea. M, D and G climbed still higher afoot. Marvellous views on this sunny day.

One day we took train (2-coach Diesel electric) from Amlwch to Llangefni, Anglesey's administration centre and market town. This was Trevor's very first train ride. This was on Thursday, their weekly market day. Had lunch in hotel nearby.

"Llan" means "church", and its use as a prefix to so many Anglesey town names indicates importance of church in old times to islanders. A village there is not considered a proper one unless it has its church and its pub, we were told. Almost all the island's churches (as distinct from the chapels of non-conformists or dissenters) seem to be of 12th century, incredibly old yet many of them still in regular use. Many are atop hills, their grey stones well weathered. The one at

at Llaneilian particularly impressive, with its old crude wooden rood or screen still showing a faded painting of a skeleton, its tiny crude chapel leading off the chancel and containing a crude altar, said to be even earlier than the 12th century portion of the little church. This is a Saxon church, with embattled roof, and almost surrounded, as are all others, with its graveyard.

One day we drove up to the clifftop at LLanpadrig, just five minutes away from Cemaes. Right at the edge, with the rocks and the sea right below, stands a very old, typically simple, stone church (St. Patrick). The small window behind the altar is of small panes of blue glass; and there is blue tiling around the wall. Some of the tombstones are at the very edge of the cliff. All names, of course, are the usual Welsh ones, Jones, Thomas, Williams, Parry, etc. and the epitaphs are in Welsh. This church, though in good repair, is now used only occasionally - no doubt because the country round about is so thinly settled.

Again, on August 2nd, we returned to this wonderful point on Trevor's Second Birthday. It was a bright sunny day, and we picknicked in the middle of a long stretch of green field surrounded on three sides by the sea. Trevor was in fine form, strutting gleefully in the sunshine. Later all but Ga climbed down one side of the cliff to bathe or wade in a sheltered cove.

The tide range at this time of year is around 23', so that although we had hired a rowboat for a week, we could use it only when the tide was in. We used to board it from the great stone jetty, where Mr. Longman seemed to preside. He also took parties on motor boat trips, and had lobster pots out. One day we noticed a large (5' ?) "tope" (shark-like) hanging from his mast. This fish he later cut up for bait, and the following day we saw him come in with some live lobsters. He later boiled them and delivered them to our house. We had them that evening, cold and delicious. Our boat: "Spray".

At Cemlin, a few miles to the west of Cemaes, we made a few trips to see birds on the lagoon of a bird sanctuary. Gwyneth spied three herons on the high brick wall of the bird lover (a Mr. Hewitt,

described to us as a wealthy bachelor eccentric who, among other things, collects steam rollers, importing them for the thrill of driving them from the station at Amlwch to his high-walled (18-20' feet?) home at lonely Cemlin. ~~XXXX~~ We saw 3 or 4 of these rollers parked under canvas beside the road. G. also spied a Redshanks, some cormorants in the distance, and what we decided were some terns, with their forked tail diving shallowly for fish. A little further on we went down to the beach at low tide looking for small shells, some of them like mother-of-pearl. Also many grey-green pebbles.

Bathing at Cemaes Bay was best at low tide, for then there was a broad sandy beach and calm water. At low tide, at the foot of Atlantic Terrace, there were great masses of jagged rocks, far out, high and dry. It was always hard to believe that at high tide people used to dive off these rocks, and some times the tips of these rocks were then barely visible.

One day we drove, through winding country coastal roads, to Church Bay, where we had been told of "The Lobster Pot". Had good lunch there, in typical Welsh stone house; afterwards down to Church Bay, curving beach with high cliffs behind.

Often in the evenings, David and Gwyneth would play in the adjacent field with David and Susan Hughes, grandchildren of the landlady. Our David was called "David big" (in Welsh the adjective comes after the noun). Often they would go to a higher field and play on the swings and see-saws. Janet also. We tried kiting on clifftops further on. Great walks anywhere around Cemaes. Farmers (sheep and cattle) allow walkers, as long as they close gates and stay to footpaths. Also plenty of rock climbing down to beaches, often along sheep trails. Often a coaster or larger ship seen sailing to or from Liverpool, probably. Some coasters some in very close, even between rocks (Middle Mouse) and shore. Gulls everywhere all the times, calling loudly and circling or swooping. Many jackdaws and at sunset a very small bird that perches on telephone lines and calls with extremely loud repeated noise - wren??

We drove down to Beau Maris one day - this is officially the county town, used to be major shipping centre before bridge was built over Menai Strait early in 19th century. Has many interesting buildings of different periods. Was a "watering place" in days of Regency, where county families had their town houses. Beau Maris Castle was built about 1300 by Ed. I

as part of his campaign to subdue Welsh. Very symmetrical plan. The last of Edwards castles. Canal cut between moat and Strait to enable ships to come right up and unload provisions, etc. at Castle. Besieged by Roundheads in Civil War.

In Beau Maris we spent some time in No. 32 Castle Street, small half-timbered building of 1400 or earlier. Now a sort of museum-antique shop.

Higher up in the town we visited the parish church (early 14th Century). Elaborately carved misericordes seats in choir. In porch is stone coffin with effigy of woman on top; said to be of King John's daughter, Princess Joan, but now empty. Once used as horse trough! Now inscription refers to "transitory nature of sublunary distinctions". We tried unsuccessfully to visit old gaol where a treadmill still is.

We had lunch on secluded promenade, facing entrance to Menai Strait, with mountains of Snowdonia in distance in Caernarvonshire, and gulls wheeling about us (which we fed). Driven by sudden shower into our car.

On then to Penmon Priory on far point, where we saw remains of a monastery built near site of earlier (600 A.D.) missionary, St. Siriol, who had his cell nearby. We saw small oval stone foundation of his hut, ~~and~~ in woods, and a small well, still flowing, where he is said to have baptized his converts all those years ago. Most impressive. Nearby also an intact 16th-17th century dovecot, with stone roof, and nests in inside walls for about 1000 pigeons.

On way back to Cemaes Bay we could not resist going via small town of Llanfair P.G. and photographing the full name.....

Nearby is farmhouse (which we did not see) where grandfather of the Tudor Henry VII was born - Penmynydd.

Anglesey is an island of rolling hills, stony and rather tree-less, but fertile, with many hedges, innumerable stone walls with huge round gate posts also of stone; cattle, many Black Welsh, and sheep.

It bustles with activity in the main villages during the holiday weeks of summer, but residents say it is deadlly dull in winter. Almost all are bi-lingual, but some of the really old speak Welsh only.

We went to the tiny fishing harbour of Moelfre to witness the launching of a new life-boat. Great crowds of people walked along the path winding along the cliffs on one side of the harbour, and perched themselves there, while an R.A.F. helicopter came along with a rescue crew seated at open hatch, their legs dangling perilously down. After the lifeboat has sped down the greased ramp into the water, a man boarded from the helicopter onto the boat. Later, another man from the 'copter descended into the sea and "rescued" a dummy, the two being then hauled aboard the plane. We then had tea in a garden tea-shop.

It rained most of the day we visited Holyhead. After winding our way through the narrow streets we found a place to park some distance away and then went to the ancient parish church, on the site where St. Cybi built his cell and made his conversions in 6th Century, within the enclosure of an old Roman wall, which is still intact. Cybi was a contemporary of Sirlol, and they are said to have met, from opposite corners of the island, frequently. This church also is battled, has curious carvings on outside walls, and an old sundial on one wall.

From here we drove up Holyhead Mountain, a bleak headland from which a tiny rock island juts into the Irish Sea. On it is Holyhead South Stack Lighthouse. On the rain David and Gwyneth climbed down the hundreds of steps, across a suspension bridge, and entered the house, where the keeper explained the light's working. (David has described it on next page).

Before we left this mountain we (D., G. and Dad) left the road and walked uphill a few years - where we came upon many circular stone huts (foundations only). These are pre-historic remains, thought to be of the 3rd century. How did they ever keep warm or dry in those primitive days, high up on the mountainside, where rain is so common and the wind usually blows?

We returned to Village (near Holyhead) a few days later, to watch some sheep dog trials - it was a sunny day this time. All Welsh sheep dogs seem to

have similar markings - they are small long-haired dogs, black but with white collars, tail-tip and sometimes some white on legs. At the far end of the field three shepp are released from a pen; the dog owner then sends his dog up to fetch these sheep back and pen them in a small temporary pen placed near the spectators. The sheep are to be driven through a gate opening on the way. Five minutes is the time allowed; and penalties are imposed if the dog allows the sheep to separate. It was marvellous to see how the shepherd, each with his own code of whistles or calls, could make his dog stop, turn right or left, come forward, etc. We also admired the crooks which some of the shephers carried.

Usually we had picknick lunches in some field, or on the occasionally rainy day, in our living room.

One day, by arrangement, we met the Jenkin family and friends of theirs, at the fine beach of Lligwy. We had lunch behind sand dunes; then had a long walk to and from the water over fine sand - which was dotted here and there with stranded jelly fish - about 8 " in diameter, and looking rather like chocolate jelly. Gwyneth's friends, the Jenking Twins, and sister Elizabeth and brother, Graham, were there.

The roads of Anglesey are excellent, and we encountered very little traffic at any time. They wind about, between fields or following the coastline, the view here and there briefly obscured by a hedge or stone wall, but usually opening onto superb views over field and hill, often onto a bay or the Irish Sea. Sheep and cattle often dot distant fields, like pieces on a draughts board.

Though the congregation at the two churches we attended were very small, and there was no choir, the volume of the singing made it seem as though the church was almost full. At the Cemaes church Ga particularly enjoyed the singing, saying she would not ask for anything more beautiful in heaven!

David and Gwyneth did much beach-combing, bringing home bags full of shells, mostly small ones. They also did much rock and cliff climbing around the points - sometimes getting out of sight and sound. Once when Dad became alarmed because he couldn't see them from where he stood atop the cliff, and he called to them, they did not answer, thinking he was a "game keeper".

Shopping in Cemaes was a simple affair. From Gorphwysfa we would either walk up across the fields, or go down and up along the shore road, to the High Street, where the dozen or so shops lined the village.

The stone jetty was a sort of social centre - there were always men, apparently local people, standing or sitting there, passing the time away. When the water was low - at about half tide - the descent down the stone steps into our boat was quite exacting. Towards the end of our stay high tide came in the evening, so we did most of our rowing then. D. and G. were required by Dad to wear life jackets whenever in the boat. After awhile D. was allowed to row off by himself - always staying in the bay - and once being given a tow by another boy in a sailboat. The first few times we three rowed out, we stopped near a cave in the rocks. It was windy and we watched some birds hovering, above a spot up on the cliff face, without moving forward at all. They were small and brown - we could not identify them. Then another evening, when the tide was lower, one of these birds alighted on a rock and, to our surprise, let us row quite close up to it. Through the binoculars we saw he had a hooked beak, and resembled slightly a sort of miniature eagle. We were told later by Mr. Longman he was a "red hawk", and that when he hovered he was watching some prey on the ground.

We set out from Cemaes Bay with much regret on Monday morning, August 8th. Having just learned of a "cromlech" near Valley, we took the west road down the island and turned off near Rhosneigr. In a far corner of a field we saw it - another large stone resting on three upright ones. Called Ty Newydd it is said to have been a burial mound of Neolithic times. Near it was a cattle trough, in which Gwyneth found a drowned hedgehog, complete with its spikes, floating on the surface. This part of the island, which we had visited briefly another afternoon, is quite flat and somewhat marshy. Although it did not appeal to us greatly, there were many great rocks on the beaches which at low water were impressive. They formed many pools, through one of which we waded. Trevor strode boldly in, just out of Dad's reach, and when the water became deeper fell forward into it. He screamed, mainly from the cold shock, but David rushed to his rescue. We went for a brief dip in the sea here while Ga waited on the beach.

Our first stop on the homeward journey was Caernarvon, at the enormous castle which Ed. I had built on the mainland side and opposite end of Menai Strait from Beau Maris. This is the mightiest of the Welsh castles, with its 7 great towers. At it Ed. I presented his infant son to the Welsh people as their Prince - the first non-welsh Prince of Wales. The town was bustling with tourists. Just before entering it we had driven past a very long, very high stone wall, perfectly smooth and of superb workmanship. We suppose this was the estate of the Earl of Caernarvon. From the castle part of the city wall still extends into the present city. Out of town, on a hill, are the remains of the old Roman fort of Segontium, founded about 80 A.D., which used to house about 1,000 men. We picknicked among the ruins of the clearly laid-out stone buildings.

We reached Harlech, with its winding hillside roads and castle perched on the edge, in time for dinner at the Castle Hotel, immediately behind the castle itself. As we could get no hotel accommodation we stopped at first "Bed & Breakfast" sign, still in Harlech. Mum was old they were full, but she met an elderly lady there who said she might be able to help us. She, Mrs. Davies, led Mum down a narrow road, lined on each side with small slate-roofed houses built of enormous grey stones. Mrs. D. spoke to her neighbour who was able to take Ga, D. and G.

for the night, while Mrs. D. put us up (M, Dad and Trevor). We breakfasted next morning in our respective houses. It was a stroke of luck to find accommodation so quickly, as it was getting dark, and this is the height of the season.

Next morning we went through Harlech Castle, from which we had marvellous views out over the valley to the waters of Cardigan Bay.

While in Caernarvon, in a Welsh wool shop, we had been told of a local wollen mill, on our way to Harlech. It was because we stayed there so long that we arrived rather late at Harlech. The mill ("Brinkir" is at Garn Dolbenmaen, right up in the hills, in the sheep country. It has been in existence some 150 years, and is powered by a waterwheel which drives a generator. David in particular studied the complete process, from the raw wool, to the spinning and weaving. Rugs, tweeds, flannels, etc. are made there. We bought a tapestry weave bed-cover which is guaranteed to last a lifetime. We had to clamber up two steep stairways, including Ga, past the looms, to get to the shop on the top floor.

Some fine mountain scenery on way south from Caernarvon. We stopped briefly at Bedgellert, a scenic resort, with mountain stream running through, where we walked to field where Prince Llewellyn had buried his favourite hound. Many holiday-makers.

From Harlech passed through bustling town of Barmouth - many holiday-makers here too. Saw our only girl in Welsh costume - selling sweets in a doorway! - Turned away from coast here, for Craven Arms, still through scenic mountain country. Somewhere past Llanbedr we turned aside to visit another mountain woollen mill at Dinas Mawddwy, Mathynlleth, Montgomeryshire. Looms were stopped for lunch, so we picknicked outside.

Bread St.
In time instead of climbing the road started to descend gradually. Past Craven Arms to Ludlow, where we had tea in one of the very old Jacobean half-timbered houses, near the Baroque Buttercross. There we visited the castle, with its large outer bailey, and then towers with their wonderful view over the Teme river valley, and the round chapel standing free in the inner bailey. This chapel basically similar to the Round Church of the Templars in

London. Sheep grazing in the outer bailey. Also visited extremely old "Reader's House", and the large parish church, cruciform like a cathedral, St. Laurence. Remarkable carvings on the undersides of seats of the misericords (choir), where monks used to stand for long periods. One portrayed fiends mocking woman's new head-dress. Lady visitor pointed out to us a trapdoor there, where monks probably relieved themselves during long vigils. Trevor soon proceeded to follow suit! Canopy above altar in a chapel given by Catharine of Aragon, who stayed at Ludlow Castle. Church dates from 1199. Much fine wood carving. We drove over bridge to get a glimpse of castle towers through trees, with bridge and Teme River in foreground - a much pictured scene.

On through Hereford to Gloucester, where we arrived around 9 P.M., having dined on way at The Axe and Cleaver, very well. Had rooms at Wellington Hotel, with its many staircases. David and Gwyneth saw, from upstairs window, the tower of Gloucester Cathedral floodlight for a "Son et Lumiere", but when ~~the~~ M and Dad went to see it, the lights had gone out!

Next day we drove straight to Cathedral, in its quiet precincts in heart of the bustling city. First impression is of the massive Norman columns of the nave. In 15th Century the chancel was modified to the Perpendicular style, some of the Norman piers being partly cut away for the purpose. Tomb of Edward II, and of Robert of Normandy, William I's eldest son. This church said to have been called one of the 6 most beautiful buildings of Europe. Wonderful fan tracery in roof of the large enclosed cloister; very old Norman crypt of abbey church period. The Perpendicular Style said to have been born in South Transept. Cathedral prospered after tomb of Edward II was brought to it - becoming shrine for pilgrims. In square nearby monument to Bishop Hooper where he was burned at stake during Marian persecutions.

Heading for Oxford through the Cotswold Hills, we digressed to see most elaborate Roman Villa at Chedworth about ten miles out of Gloucester. Just before reaching it we stopped at small wayside Mill Inn, old pub, where we had half-pints of bitter in the garden, and fried chicken "in the basket". Excellent. In The Chadworth villa, on a hillside, is remarkably well preserved, especially the elaborate and varied bathing arrangements, showing stoke holes, underfloor

heating, and wall heating pipes. Many carved columns, steps, some mosaic on floors. Horseshoes, window glass and pigiron in museum.

After by-passing Oxford, turned south, home via Ealing Common. Home again around 7, Wednesday, August 10 - pleased to find lawns recently cut and house in order! Trevor straight to bed!

South Stack Lighthouse

is on a small island in the Irish Sea.

It is at base of Holy Head Mt. Descend by steps (360 down Mt.). Go over small suspension bridge to island. 110 steps up 90ft high Lt.

There was a rough sea at the time and misty. Saw at top lens magnifying light of two 1000 Watt bulbs to $2\frac{1}{2}$ million candle-power. Each bulb costs \$19 and is changed after 1000 hours of use. There are light curtains around the glass walls to prevent the lens from magnifying the heat of the sun. The lens are in a case altogether weighing $2\frac{1}{2}$ tons. It is so perfectly balanced that the guide turned it round with his finger. It rests on a half ton of mercury. The lens are turned by a clock-work mechanism with weights going down the length of the Light-House.

When working, they have to be wound every two-hours. On the ground floor we saw the generators which provide all the electricity.

There are three generators for the light bulbs run ~~alternatively~~ alternative nights. There are two larger ~~ones~~ for pumping air into the fog horn. The light from the lighthouse

can reach 20 miles in clear weather. Climbed up the mountain again having then climbed 1120 steps. Gwyneth and I made this trip while the rest of the family waited in the car at the top. The Dad joined us and we went a bit further up the mountain and saw some ^{stone} hut dwellings occupied in the 3rd - 5th century. There are at least 20. They are rectangular or circular in shape and all have a little entrance to the door